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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 000167

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SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY FOR DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS

MARIA OTERO'S JANUARY 31, 2010, MEETING WITH THE TFG

PRESIDENT

Classified By: Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson f  
or reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson, in a January 31 meeting with Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Sheikh Sharif on the margins of the AU Summit underscored continued USG support but urged Sharif to broaden his government's base, deliver services to the Somali people, and work with AMISOM to bolster the TFG's position on the ground. President Sharif thanked the USG for its support and, while admitting that 2009 had been a difficult debut year for his government, noted that the TFG had survived and had even recorded some modest achievements. Among them, he said, was the re-opening of the Central Bank of Somalia, expanded broadcasting by Radio Mogadishu, progress on reform of the armed forces, and, most recently, a contract to mint a new Somali currency.

12. (C) Summary continued: Sharif indicated that the TFG had intensified its efforts at outreach. The Minister for National Security was currently in Galkayo in an effort to mobilize troops and create a base for upcoming operations. The Ministers of Telecommunications and Finance were managing the TFG's ongoing efforts to reach out to Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ). Sharif predicted that efforts to reform TFG security forces in Mogadishu, TFG outreach to ASWJ, and troops trained by Kenya and Ethiopia would coalesce into a comprehensive effort to push al-Shabaab out of south central Somalia. Needed, Sharif said, were ammunition, weapons, medical supplies, and communication equipment.

13. (C) Summary continued: In response to a question from A/S Carson, Sharif indicated qualified support for Kenya's "Jubaland initiative." He had told the Kenyans that the TFG did not want to see an effort that would divide Somalia into two parts or "create more problems that it solves." Sharif had been told that the estimated two thousand ethnic Somali troops were being well-trained by Kenya and that more than the Marehan and Ogaden clans were represented. End summary.

A/S Carson Underlines USG Support, but Urges TFG Action  
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14. (C) Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson opened a January 31 meeting with TFG President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed on the margins of the AU Summit in Addis Ababa by reiterating strong USG support for both the TFG and the AMISOM units that protect the TFG in Mogadishu. A/S Carson also passed USG condolences on the deaths of three TFG ministers and of numerous faculty and students of Banadir University in the December 3, 2009, Mogadishu suicide bombing.

15. (C) While noting that he knew the TFG was already engaged in regional outreach efforts, A/S Carson urged that the government more quickly broaden its base, especially with ASWJ. He urged Sharif to pressure members of Parliament to expand the reach of the TFG in their home regions. A/S Carson applauded the TFG's success in expanding and improving broadcasting by Radio Mogadishu and urged the TFG to continue to enhance its media efforts. The government also had to deliver services, A/S Carson noted. The funding of health clinics and of schools was needed in order to build public support. The USG, A/S Carson noted later in the conversation, was prepared to put "dollars in your hands for service delivery, especially for education and health." "A government that provides services to its people is respected and has its peoples' support," A/S Carson said.

#### Rallying International Support for the TFG

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16. (C) A/S Carson indicated that the USG would continue to support efforts to train TFG troops. He asked Sharif to push the Europeans to make good on their 2009 Brussels International Contact Group meeting pledges and reported that the USG was urging the Arab League to meet its commitments as well.

17. (C) A/S Carson told Sharif that he had had a good session with UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe during the AU Summit about how to help the AU meet AMISOM's eight thousand troop ceiling.

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#### Much Learned and Some Modest Successes During TFG's First Year in Office

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18. (C) Sharif thanked the USG for its support and told A/S Carson that the USG shared credit for his government's modest successes in 2009. His first year in office had been "difficult," but the government had learned much and the stage was set for a more successful second year in office. Among the TFG's successes was that it had survived in the face of terrorism, lawlessness, inertia, greed, and foreign meddling.

19. (C) Sharif highlighted other successes: there had been modest, but positive changes in the TFG's leadership; TFG forces had been trained in neighboring countries, Radio Mogadishu was making steady progress in the propaganda war; the Central Bank of Somalia was open and functioning; the Somali people were convinced that al-Shabaab was not working in the best interests of the government; and Sudan's agreement to fund the printing of a new Somali shilling would ultimately allow the TFG to gain control of its currency. In cooperation with local businessmen, the TFG had made modest improvements at the Mogadishu port, the Mogadishu airport, and was in the process of physically buttressing the parliament building.

110. (C) Sharif reassured A/S Carson that the TFG had a vigorous strategy for the regions. The TFG's Minister of National Security was currently in Galkayo (Mudug region) in order to mobilize Somalis and build a base for upcoming operations against al-Shabaab. TFG military officers were near el-Bur (Galgaduud region), where they were working with ASWJ. The Deputy Prime Minister/Finance Minister and the Minister of Telecommunications were responsible for the TFG's efforts with ASWJ and they were having some success.

111. (C) Sharif said that USG support was needed for the TFG's planned military campaign. An AMISOM-backed TFG offensive in Mogadishu would be complemented by ASWJ-led efforts in Hiraan and Galgaduud regions, as well as the entry into battle of troops currently being trained by Kenya. The TFG needed

ammunition, weapons, medical supplies, and communications equipment in order to launch its offensive, Sharif said. All regions had been contacted and were mobilizing elders and women's groups. In addition to weapons and ammunition, local militias needed food and pocket money. There was a severe shortage of transport for the troops, as well as of medicine. Sharif said that he was thinking of visiting the U.S. "after the military operations have succeeded."

Qualified "Yes" on Kenya's  
Lower Juba Initiative  
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¶12. (C) Sharif offered a qualified "yes" when asked if he supported the GOK's Lower Juba initiative. He had told the GOK that the TFG did not want to see Somalia further divided. That would create more problems than it would solve, he added. The GOK had reassured the TFG that it also did not want to see Somalia divided and that it intended to use the troops now being trained in Kenya for a national not a regional mission.

¶13. (C) Sharif believed that the ethnic Somali troops currently in Isiolo, Kenya, were receiving good training but did not have all of the equipment they needed. Sharif thought that perhaps the USG could assist the Kenyan effort. He concluded by noting that the enemy the TFG faced was global and that defeating it should not be on the shoulders of the TFG alone.

¶14. (C) A/S Carson hoped that the planned TFG offensive would be successful. He said that he would confer with the Ugandans about providing additional material resources. He urged the TFG to suggest ideas for community support and service delivery to USAID. USAID Acting Assistant Administrator for Africa Earl Gast seconded AID's willingness to work with the government in providing community services and briefly previewed an upcoming contract with IOM that could support the TFG's efforts.

Comment  
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¶15. (C) As he has in other, recent meetings, Sharif appeared self-possessed and confident. His qualified willingness to support the long-incubated Kenyan Lower Juba initiative at this meeting was at variance with the skepticism he had expressed to Somalia Unit in Nairobi about two weeks ago (septel). At that time, he suggested that the troops in training at Isiolo did not have broad-based clan representation and speculated that it might be better to bring them to Mogadishu and integrate them into existing TFG security forces. He also in that meeting seemed more skeptical of the GOK's ability to manage a cross-border offensive.

Participants  
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¶16. (U) USG:

Undersecretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otiero  
Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson  
NSC Senior Director for African Affairs Michhelle Gavin  
Ambassador to the African Union Michael Battle  
Charge d'affaires, Embassy Addis Ababa John Yates  
USAID Acting Assistant Administrator for Africa Gast  
Counselor for Somalia Affairs, Embassy Nairobi Patterson  
(notetaker)

Somalia Transitional Federal Government:

President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed

Deputy Prime Minister Sharif Hassan  
Minister of Telecommunications Abdirizak Osman "Jirile"  
President's Chief-of-Staff, Abdulkareem Jama (interpreter)  
Member of Parliament Amina Mursal  
YATES